

[Review] Nicole C. Engard (ed.) (2015) More library mashups: exploring new ways to deliver library data

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Book review

Nicole C. Engard (ed). ***More library mashups: exploring new ways to deliver library data***. \$45. New Jersey: Information Today, 2015. ISBN: 9781573874984. 362 pp.

Readers who enjoyed the first edition of Engard's Library Mashups published in 2009 will probably also find More Library Mashups very useful. This type of material can go out of date incredibly quickly and although the appendix provides us with a comprehensive range of links to updated online content, to get the most out of the book I would recommend reading it sooner rather than later. The accompanying website: <http://mashups.web2learning.net/> also promises to provide a list of links for each chapter although at the time of writing I was only able to find those that related to the first edition. So what is a mashup? Library mashups use library data (from the catalogue or various other systems) and combine them with external data sources with the goal of creating an enhanced and improved service for the user.

The whole book is packed with ideas and recommendations for ways to add value to library data. Each chapter is a case study of a library mashup that has been successfully carried out and the contributors explain their projects in an inspiring and positive way, giving us the detail needed to replicate their work and learn from their mistakes. There are instructions, screen shots, code snippets and project plans, and many of the case studies provide us with direct links to access their code in GitHub. Despite being written in part for those who are not computer science experts, there are some sections that are clearly going to be more suited to those with a programming background or at least a basic understanding of code.

Perhaps unsurprisingly around a third of the projects utilise products and APIs from the Google Developers range, however we are also given guidance on how to use a variety of other free tools, software and services such as IFTTT (If This Then That – great for automating data flows between multiple websites and social network accounts), Open Refine, Umlaut, Blacklight, Koha, MarcEdit and many more. A few of the case studies explain how to create improved data visualisations by mixing library data with maps, combining bibliographic records with geographic locations

for example. I was particularly impressed by the map mash up of chapter 14; 'Creating computer availability maps' by Scott Bacon whose project enables library users to view a live-time map online which shows them which computer terminals are in use within the building. The chapter includes screen shots and a sample of the database tables that they developed and allows us to understand how the project was organised and who was involved.

The chapter headings overall are descriptive enough that the reader can easily identify the particular sections that may be relevant to them. It is unlikely that all parts will appeal to all people but each section can stand alone and be referred back to as a manual for creating mashups. Whilst reading I skipped over some chapters whereas others I returned to several times and re-read areas of interest. As a cataloguer studying for my Information Systems MSc the majority of the material was extremely relevant to my job and to my studies. I imagine it would be useful too for those studying for Library and Information Postgraduate qualifications or indeed anyone at all who works in (or would like to work in) a library. I was excited and inspired by Chapter 10; 'Mashups and next generation catalog at work', where Anne Lena Westrum and Asegir Rekkevik describe their RDF and Linked Data project at the Oslo Public library. As I use MarcEdit every day I also found much of interest in Chapter 19; 'Disassembling the ILS: using MarcEdit and Koha as an example of how users are using system APIs to develop custom workflows' by Terry Reese. Kyle M. Hall made me laugh out loud with his chapter 'Libki and Koha: leveraging open source software for single sign-on integration' but more importantly opened my eyes to the possibilities offered by an Open Source ILS.

As well as developers, librarians and general metadata wranglers, a really important readership for this book could be those who are in charge of budgets for technical development in libraries. If there is one thing that is communicated above all others by the case studies, it is that the software and tools required to make the most of your library's data are already out there and they are free and open to use – they do not always have to come in the shape of restrictive and expensive contracts with

software vendor giants. The real value in these projects has come from the expertise of the people carrying them out. When you combine the collaborative spirit and the sharing culture of the Open Source network with really skilled programmers and librarians then amazing things are possible. At a time when library budgets, particularly those of the public libraries in the UK, are being squeezed hard this book shows that a very sensible place to direct diminishing funds is the recruitment and on-going development of a dedicated and technically competent workforce who are given the resources necessary to carry out projects such as the ones described.

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